[This transcript was created by LAI staff. It is as true a representation of the original as we could create. When a word was too difficult to decipher or was questionable we put those words in brackets. All text in brackets represents the voice of the transcriber rather than the voice of the letter writer. We have not maintained the spacing that exists in the original letters because that was not compliant with our accessibility standards. We are left justifying most lines.]

[citation information]
Collection title: Corcoran Gallery of Art and Corcoran College of Art + Design, Corcoran Gallery of Art directors' records
Collection number: COR-0002-0-RG
Series 1: MacLeod, Barbarin and McGuire records
Subseries 1: Indexed correspondence
Box 2008-001
Folder 41: Letters 401-410

[Front of Letter 401]
Walters, W.T., Balt. Sept 17/74
Sep 18/74
Sends receipt of Fureschi. Desgoffe picture will be sent tomorrow.

[Letter 401]

Balto. 17th Sept 74

Mr. MacLeod,

I enclose receipt of ‘Fureschi’.

I had sent today to Mr. Riggs and asked him to hand you when he had read a letter from Mr. Lucas and one from “Desgoffe” describing his picture - get them - the picture will go to you tomorrow or next day - let me know how you like it, after it leaves here the custom house will have nothing to do with it.

Your friend,
W.T. Walters

[Front of Letter 402]
Weir, John F., New Haven, Sept 16. 1874
Sept 17/74
With regard to the exchange of Photographs [et.al?]

[Letter 402]

Yale College, New Haven
Sept 16th 1874

Mr. Wm MacLeod, Curator Corcoran Art Gallery

Dear Sir,

We should be most happy to receive the photographs of objects of Art in your collection, and as opportunity affords we shall be pleased to reciprocate.

[Illegible] I rightly understand that you had visited New Haven during the summer. If so I regret very much that I should have missed you.

I cannot but think that such an enterprise as that you have [illegible] in the way of a liberal exchange or distribution of photographs of your collection, will be found useful. I think there should be some concurrence in action with respect to the formation of Museum of Casts in this Country. So as to avoid repetition as much as possible by obtaining such casts as are not to be seen elsewhere here. By this means each Museum would possess distinct features of its own.

Believe me, very truly yours,
John F. Weir
Director of New Yale School of the Fine Arts

[Front of Letter 403]
Halsey, D.P., Richmond, Va., Sept 22. 1874
Sept 23/74, 23/74
Offers a painting (Rembrandt) for sale.

[Letter 403]

[Letterhead of the Law Office of Don P. Halsey, Room No. 16 “Shafer’s Building,” corner of Main and Tenth Streets.)
Richmond, VA., 22nd September 1874

Hon. W.W. Corcoran, Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I am the owner of an oil painting to which I respectfully invite your attention. I have every reason to believe that it is a genuine Rembrandt. It bears his name and the date 1639; it exhibits the peculiar characteristics of his style (chiaro oscuro and exquisite [grouping?]), and is

evidently one of his studies for the great picture in the Dresden Gallery - “Ahasuerus and Esther”. No competent artist, who has seen it, has ever doubled the genuineness of this picture. It is now in the studio of my friend the Artist F.J. Fisher, Esq. in this city, and has his and McElder’s [qualified?] endorsement. I purchased it while a student of Law in Germany in 1858, having at the time but a meager idea of its real merit. In my present pecuniary condition it is too valuable for me to retain, and I seek to find a purchaser. I should like for it to have a place in the Corcoran Gallery of Washington.

I am willing to sell it for such a price as competent critics may adjudge a fair value. To be appreciated it must be seen. If you are willing to entertain the idea of a purchase, I shall be happy to [illegible] it to any authorized Agent whom you may send to examine it, or if desirous will carry it on to Washington City that its merits may then be [illegible].

In size the picture is small, I should think about 20/12 inches.

Though unknown to you personally, I had the honor whilst in Europe (especially in Rome 1859-60) of enjoying the acquaintance, and I believe friendship of your late daughter and Ms. Eustis.

With great respect, Yr. Obt. Servant
D.P. Halsey

[Front of Letter 404]
Desgoffe, B., Paris, Aug 26 1874
Description of his picture.

[Letter 404]

[Letter is in French and requires translation]

[Front of Letter 405]
Lherbette Kane & Co., Paris, Sept. 10. 1874
Encloses invoice of 3 cases (Barys Bronzes) sent per Str Hannover from Southampton Sept 12/74

[Letter 405]

[Letterhead of Lherbette Kane & Co., North German Lloyd Steamships]
Paris, 10th Sept 1874

Mr. A. Hyde, Secretary, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

We beg to hand you enclosed legalised invoice of No 20/22 - 3 cs. which will ship you per steamer “Hannover” 12th inst. from Southampton, in accordance with instructions received from Mr. Lucas.

We remain, Dear Sir, Yours Truly
Lherbette Kane

[Enclosed Bill of Lading for Letter 405]

[Front of Letter 406]
Lherbette Kane & Co., Paris, Sept 11/74
Sept 28/74
Sends Bill of Lading of 3 cases of Bronzes.

[Letter 406]

[Missing Enclosure. Possible duplication of Letter 405]

[Front of Letter 407]
Sartain, John, Phila., Sept 12/74
Sept 14/74, 24/74
Color for walls of a Gallery. Painting of casts, etc.

[Letter 407]

[Letterhead of Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia]
Sept. 12th 1874, 728. Sansom St.

Wm. MacLeod Esq.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 3rd inst. came duly to hand, and again I have to apologise for delay in my answer. My excuse is that I am so loaded down with multitudinous cares and engagements that I have found it impossible to give your queries proper attention until now.

For a Gallery in which only plaster casts are displayed there need not be so much anxiety as to a particular tint, as must be in the case of a picture gallery where the tint of the wall has an effect on the tone of color in the picture that hangs on it. My inclination would be to make the

tint of the wall just dark enough to give a distinct relief to the casts, but not so dark as to make that relief sharp and cutting.

Then as to whether the tint should be a warm or a cool one, I should let that be determined by the size of the room. A cool tint makes the wall retire from the eye, therefore a small room may be thus made to appear larger than it really is. A warm tint produces the contrary effect, and especially when that tint is dark. If any figure or pattern is on the wall care should be exercised to make the figure small, not large, and the figures should have no shadow represented, but should be of the nature of [stincelling?], and should be of the same color as the wall precisely, but only a shade darker or lighter.

If the figures are of white plaster, a student can see clearer the definition of the forms while drawing from them, but it is destructive to the sight, and upon the whole (especially for mere exhibition purposes) it is better to paint them of the tender tint of statuary marble, carefully avoiding gloss. But it is of the utmost importance that the plaster be first prepared by painting them over with thin Shellac to choke the pores, otherwise the absorbing nature of the cast will cause the vehicle to rush in, leaving a clotted mass of pigment outside - utterly annihilating all refinement of form.

I have seen a small gallery of marble sculpture in which a charming effect was produced by means that I regarded as novel. The walls are pink. When you come to Philadelphia again I would advise you to go and see it. It belonged to the late Henry D. Gilpin (formerly ATT? Gen. U.S.) and is at the S.W. corner of 11th & Spruce Streets.

So far as regards the color of walls for the relief of paintings, it is necessary to bear in mind that a pearlly grey tint will destroy the effect of landscapes that have in them tender and delicate distances. It makes them look dirty and smeary.

There is such a variety of tastes in people on this subject; that you will find the work denounced, do what whatever you will. My own observation has brought me to this conclusion, that those who are the loudest and most confident in their criticism, are apt to be the very ones whose knowledge or judgement is least to be relied on. You know “fools rush in where angels fear to tread”. But you may sum up general effects into something approaching law, thus, cool and pale tints expand the rooms and produce an airy effect, an intellectuality, but cold & cheerless. Rich warm tints on the contrary close in the walls upon you, producing at the same time sensations of luxury and comfort, and a rich effect even on the pictures, harmonizing finely with the gold on the frames. And it is only on this kind of wall that pictures by the old masters should be hung to prevent them from looking dark and dirty. There are certain [proprieties?] that must not be ignored if you would preserve harmony, as for example, silver with blue, gold with red, but I am getting tedious.

Our Academy Building is getting on very well. The iron frame work of the roof is on the ground and ready to raise. The eighteen polished marble columns of the stairway are up, and the last of the arches are being turned over them. I am glad you are likely to be here this fall that I may

take you through the building and explain to you the various uses of the different [apartments?] which none know as well as I do, because the building is from my plans and arrangement. The architectural taste and constructive skill belong to the architects.

I rejoice to learn of the additions to the collection of your noble Institution and hope soon to see them. The Discobolus you have, there is no doubt our Academy would like to purchase provided it is not the same that we have. The figure upright measuring the distance with his eye we have. The one in act of throwing the quoit we have not got, but that is by Myron.

Yours truly
John Sartain

[Front of Letter 408]
Bland, Ths., Assist Secty. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Sept 23/74
Ansd Sept 26/74
Sends Catalogue and requests on from the Gallery.

[Letter 408]

[Letterhead of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; New York]
23 September 1874

Jas. L. Carlisle Esq, President, Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Sir,

Wishing to extend a [knowledge?] of the existence of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, of its progress and of the Works of Art which it contains. I take pleasure in sending you copies of the last Annual Report and Catalogues of Pictures on Exhibition.

Your forwarding of a copy of any Catalogue published of the Institution of which you are President, will be [illegible] a favor.

I am, Sir, Yours Resptly
[Ths.?] Bland
Assist. Secty

[Letter 409]

Washington, D.C.

It is hereby agreed this twenty eighth day of September A.D. 1874 between the Corcoran Gallery of Art and George W. Chamberlin.

That the said Chamberlin shall paint the walls of the Upper Hall at the head of the main stairs, with five good coats of paint, of such color as may be selected, the last coast to be stippled.

That when the work shall have been completed, and accepted by the Committee on the Building, the said Chamberlin shall receive the sum of one hundred dollars in full payment for the same.

Geo. W. Chamberlin

[Back of Letter 409]
Chamberlin, Geo. W., Sept 28. 1874
Agreement to paint walls of Upper Hall for $100.
[Signed agreement from Geo. W. Chamberlin enclosed with letter]

[Front of Letter 410]
Bronzes
List of Bronzes received at the Gallery, Oct 1. 1874

[Letter 410]

[List of Bronzes enclosed]